

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. - 36. (cancelled)

37. (previously presented) An apparatus comprising:

a reservation booking database having a plurality of records, the plurality of records corresponding to a plurality of time-slots for tables at a restaurant;

a web site module configured to create an Internet web site to enable an Internet user to book a table at the restaurant, the web site module further comprising:

a time-slot display module configured to display one or more available time-slots corresponding to one or more tables at the restaurant's place of business; and

a booking module configured to enable the Internet user to book one of the available time-slots in the reservation booking database; and

a restaurant maintenance module configured to provide the restaurant access to the restaurant's table reservation booking database, the restaurant maintenance module further comprising:

a table reservation management module configured to enable the restaurant to book time-slots in the reservation booking database to reserve tables at the restaurant for customers not making bookings over the Internet;

a first computer located at the restaurant, the first computer configured to store a first copy of the reservation booking database;

a second computer located at a location remote from the restaurant, the second computer configured to store a second copy of the reservation booking database; and

the first computer being connected to the second computer through the internet, the first computer is configured to be connected to the internet using an always connected, non-dial up connection, to the internet so that the first computer and the second computer can synchronize the second copy of the reservation booking database when the first copy of the reservation booking database on the first computer is updated.

38. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the web site module further comprises an Internet search module configured to locate the restaurant in response to a search request submitted by the Internet user to locate the restaurant among a plurality of restaurants affiliated with the web site.

39. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the time-slot display module of the web site module further comprises a time-slot search module configured to search and display the available time-slots for tables at the restaurant's place of business during a selected time period as defined by the Internet user.

40. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 39, wherein the time-slot search module is further configured to search and display the available and not-available time slot-increments for tables accommodating a specific party size as defined by the Internet user.

41. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the booking module of the web site module is further configured to require the Internet user to submit personal information over the Internet to book one of the available time-slots.

42. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 41, wherein the personal information includes at least one of the following types of information: the Internet user's name; the Internet user's email address; the Internet user's mailing address; the Internet user's phone number; the Internet user's credit card information; and the Internet user's password.

43. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 41, wherein the booking module of the web site module is further configured to write the personal information submitted by the Internet user into the reservation booking database of the restaurant, the personal information being written into the record in the restaurant's reservation booking database corresponding to the time-slot displayed by the time-slot display module and booked by the Internet user.

44. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 41, wherein the web site module further comprises a confirmation module configured to generate a confirmation message over the Internet to the Internet user after the personal information has been written to the reservation booking database of the restaurant to confirm the booking of the selected time-slot.

45. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the web site module further comprises a reminder module configured to send a reminder message over the Internet to the Internet user of the booked time-slot for the reserved table at the restaurant's place of business a predetermined time period prior to the date of the booking.

46. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the Internet web site further comprises a link module configured to link to a web page associated with the restaurant.

47. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the restaurant maintenance module further comprises a password module configured to accept a unique password to prevent the unauthorized access to the reservation booking database belonging to the restaurant.

48. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the table reservation management module is further configured to permit the restaurant to manage a substantial portion of its time-slot inventory for table bookings made by both Internet users through the Web site module or by non-Internet users.

49. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 48, wherein the table reservation management module further comprises a restaurant display module configured to permit the restaurant to display the available and the booked time-slots for the tables at the restaurant's place of business during a selected time period.

50. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 49, wherein the restaurant display module is further configured to display the time-slot inventory of tables at the restaurant, the booked time-slots and the available time-slots during the selected time period.

51. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the restaurant display module is further configured to display the time-slot inventory of tables and the time increments for the availability of the tables on a computer display.

52. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the restaurant display module is further configured to display the restaurant's booked and available time-slots for tables at the restaurant in at least one of the following seatings at the restaurant: a dinner seating; and a lunch seating.

53. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the restaurant display module is further configured to display the bookings of time-slots for tables previously booked at the restaurant by Internet users through the Web site module.

54. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the restaurant display module is further configured to display the bookings of time-slots for tables previously

booked for customers by the restaurant through the table reservation management module.

55. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein the time-slots displayed by the restaurant display module provides pointers to corresponding records among the plurality of records in the reservation booking database of the restaurant.

56. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 55, wherein the corresponding records contains fields configured to store customer information related to the time-slot booked in the name of the customer.

57. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 56, wherein the corresponding records include at least one of the following fields: a name field for storing the name of the customer; a mailing address field for storing the mailing address of the customer; an email address field for storing the email address of the customer; a phone number field for storing the phone number of the customer; a credit card field for storing the credit card information of the customer; and a password field for storing the password information of the customer.

58. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 55, further comprising a restaurant data entry module configured to allow the restaurant to write customer information into one of the records to book an available time-slot in the name of the customer.

59. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 55, wherein each booked time-slot displayed by the restaurant display module is a link to a second data display that displays the customer information in the record when the booked time-slot is selected by the restaurant.

60. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 59, wherein the second data display is further configured to display the customer information in the record corresponding to

the booked time-slot regardless of whether the time-slot was booked over the Internet by an Internet user or by the restaurant using the table reservation management module.

61. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 59, wherein the second data display further comprises a data entry field configured to receive data input from the restaurant indicating that the customer that booked the time-slot has arrived at the restaurant.

62. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 48, wherein the table reservation management module further comprises a customer search module to aid the restaurant in finding one of the time-slots booked in the name of a customer in the reservation booking database.

63. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 62, wherein the customer search module performs the search using at least one of the following search criteria: date of booking; name of customer who made the booking; email address of the customer who made the booking; or telephone number of the customer who made the booking.

64. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37 wherein the web site module further comprises a first cancellation module configured to permit the Internet user to cancel over the Internet a previously booked timeslot for a table booked by the Internet user at the restaurant's place of business.

65. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the restaurant maintenance module further comprises a second cancellation module configured to permit the restaurant to cancel a previously booked time-slot for a table at the restaurant's place of business.

66. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the restaurant maintenance module further comprises a communication module configured to permit the restaurant to send communication messages to Internet users over the Internet.

67. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the restaurant maintenance module further comprises a block-out module configured to enable the restaurant to selectively block-out time-slots in the reservation booking database so that the blocked-out time-slots can not be booked.

68. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the web site module is configured to reside on a central computing location coupled to the Internet.

69. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the restaurant maintenance module for the restaurant, including the reservation booking database and the table reservation management module, are configured to reside on a computer affiliated with the restaurant.

70. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 69, wherein the restaurant maintenance module is further configured to write reservation updates to the restaurant's reservation booking database over the Internet to an aggregate database located at a central computing location, the aggregate database containing the reservation booking databases for a plurality of restaurants affiliated with the web site.

71. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 68, wherein the restaurant maintenance module for the restaurant, the reservation booking database and the table reservation management module, are further configured to reside at the central computing location and are accessible by the restaurant over the Internet.

72. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 71 further comprising an aggregate database configured to reside at the central computing location, the aggregate database including the reservation booking databases of a plurality of restaurants affiliated with the web site.

73. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 71, wherein the restaurant maintenance module for the restaurant is further configured to write updates to the restaurant's reservation booking database over the Internet to a duplicate restaurant reservation booking database located on a computer associated with the restaurant.

74. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the web site module further comprising a web page module for the restaurant, the web page module configured to post information pertaining to the restaurant over the Internet.

75. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 74, wherein the restaurant maintenance module further comprises an editing module configured to permit the selected restaurant to edit the restaurant's web page module.

76. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 38, wherein the Internet search module is further configured to locate the selected restaurant based on at least one of the following search criteria: name of the selected restaurant; location of the selected restaurant; or type of cuisine offered by the selected restaurant.

77. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 76, wherein the web site module is further configured to display the search results of the search request submitted by the Internet user, the search results including at least one of the following types of information for the restaurants meeting the search request: the names of the restaurants; the location of the restaurants; the type of cuisine offered by the restaurants; reviews of the restaurants; a price range for the restaurants and posted comments from other Internet users regarding the restaurants.

78. (currently amended) The ~~software-product~~ apparatus of claim 37, further comprising a table layout display module, the table layout display module further configured to display the layout of tables at the restaurant's place of business.

79. (currently amended) The ~~software product~~ apparatus of claim 78, wherein the table layout display module is further configured to display booked tables in a first display mode and open tables in a second display mode.

80. (previously presented) A reservation system comprising:

a reservation booking database having a plurality of records, the plurality of records corresponding to a plurality of time-slots for tables at a selected restaurant;

a central computing location configured to host an Internet web site for booking reservations:

an Internet search module configured to identify the selected restaurant in response to a search request submitted by an Internet user to identify the selected restaurant affiliated with the web site;

a time-slot display module configured to display one or more available time-slots each corresponding to one or more tables at the selected restaurant's place of business; and

a booking module configured to permit the Internet user to book one of the available time-slots to reserve the corresponding table in the reservation booking database;

a local computer located at the selected restaurant, the local computer configured to cooperate with the central computing location and including a table reservation management module configured to permit the selected restaurant to book time-slots in the reservation booking database to reserve tables at the selected restaurant for customers not making bookings over the Internet;

the local computer being further configured to store the reservation booking database;

the central computing location being further configured to store a second copy of the reservation booking database; and

the local computer being connected to the central computing location through an always on non-dial up connection to the internet so that the local

computer and the central computing location can synchronize the second copy of the reservation booking database when the first copy of the reservation booking database on the local computer is updated.

81. (cancelled)

82. (previously presented) The reservation system of claim 80, further comprising a second reservation booking database located on the local computer, the second reservation booking database configured to be a duplicate of the first reservation booking database associated with the selected restaurant.

83. (previously presented) The reservation system of claim 82, further comprising an update module located at the central computing location, the update module configured to update the second reservation booking database located at the local computer of the selected restaurant when the Internet user books one of the available time-slots in the reservation booking database of the selected restaurant.

84. (previously presented) The reservation system of claim 82, further comprising an update module located at the local computer, the upgrade module configured to update the reservation booking database located at the central computing location when the selected restaurant books one of the available time slots in the second reservation booking database of the selected restaurant.

85. (previously presented) The reservation system of claim 80, wherein the table reservation management module is further configured to permit the selected restaurant to manage a selected portion of its time-slots for table bookings made by both Internet users through the booking module or by non-Internet users.

86. (previously presented) The reservation system of claim 80, wherein the table reservation management module further comprises a restaurant display module

configured to permit the selected restaurant to display the available and the booked time-slots for the tables at the selected restaurant's place of business during a time period defined by the selected restaurant.

87. (previously presented) The reservation system of claim 86, wherein the restaurant display module is further configured to display the bookings of time-slots for tables previously booked at the selected restaurant by Internet users through the booking module.

88. (previously presented) The reservation system of claim 86, wherein the restaurant display module is further configured to display the bookings of time-slots for tables previously booked for customers by the selected restaurant through the table reservation management module.

89. (previously presented) The reservation system of claim 86, wherein the time-slots in the time-slot inventory displayed by the restaurant display module provides pointers to corresponding records among the plurality of records in the reservation booking database of the selected restaurant.

90. (previously presented) The reservation system of claim 89, wherein the corresponding record contains fields configured to store customer information related to the time-slot booked in the name of the customer.

91. (previously presented) The reservation system of claim 90, wherein the corresponding record includes at least one of the following fields: a name field for storing the name of the customer; a mailing address field for storing the mailing address of the customer; an email address field for storing the email address of the customer; a phone number field for storing the phone number of the customer; a credit card field for storing the credit card information of the customer; and a password field for storing the password information of the customer.

92. (previously presented) The reservation system of claim 90 wherein the corresponding record includes at least one of the following fields: a smoking field to indicate if the customer requires a smoking table; a special occasions field to indicate if the customer is celebrating special occasion; and a dietary request field to indicate if the customer has a special dietary request.

93. (previously presented) The reservation system of claim 86, further comprising a restaurant data entry module configured to allow the selected restaurant to write customer information into the record corresponding to the selected time-slot to book the selected time-slot in the name of the customer by the selected restaurant.

94. (previously presented) The reservation system of claim 86, wherein each time-slot displayed by the restaurant display module is a link to a second display that displays the customer information in the record corresponding to a booked time-slot when the booked time-slot is selected.

95. (previously presented) The reservation system of claim 86, wherein the table reservation management module further comprises a customer search module to aid the selected restaurant in finding a booked time-slot booked in the name of a specified customer.

96. (previously presented) The reservation system of claim 80, wherein the central computing system further comprises a cancellation module configured to permit the Internet user to cancel a previously booked time-slot for a table booked by the Internet user.

97. (previously presented) The reservation system of claim 80, wherein the local computer further comprising a table layout display module, the table layout display

module further configured to display the layout of tables at the selected restaurant's place of business.

98. (cancelled)

99. (previously presented) A method comprising:

providing a first restaurant a first reservation booking database having a plurality of records, the plurality of records corresponding to a plurality of time-slots for tables at the first restaurant

providing a restaurant table reservation management module configured to enable the first restaurant to book time-slots in the first reservation booking database to reserve the tables at the first restaurant for customers not making bookings over the Internet;

providing an Internet booking module configured to enable an Internet user to book an available one of the time-slots to reserve one of the tables at the first restaurant; and

providing a first computer at the first restaurant, the first computer configured to maintain the first reservation booking database;

providing a copy of the first reservation booking database at a central computing location;

providing an always on non-dial-up internet connection between the first computer and the central computing location; and

updating the copy of the first reservation booking database in substantially real time when the first restaurant books time-slots in the first reservation booking database to reserve tables for customers not making bookings over the Internet.

100. (previously presented) The method of claim 99, further comprising providing the first reservation booking database at the first restaurant's location.

101.- 103. (cancelled)

104. (previously presented) The method of claim 99, further comprising aggregating a plurality of reservation booking databases associated with a plurality of restaurants at the central computing location.

105. (previously presented) The method of claim 99, further comprising maintaining a restaurant related web site, affiliating a plurality of restaurants with the web site, and providing the plurality of restaurants a plurality of the reservation booking databases and a plurality of the table reservation management modules respectively.

106. (previously presented) The method of claim 105, further comprising providing a search module with the web site to enable the Internet user to search for a selected restaurant among the plurality of restaurants affiliated with the web site.

107. (previously presented) The method of claim 99, wherein providing the table reservation management module further comprises enabling the first restaurant to manage a selected portion of its time-slots for table bookings made by Internet users and for customers not making reservations over the Internet.

108. (previously presented) The method of claim 99, wherein the providing the table reservation management module further comprises providing a restaurant display module configured to enable the first restaurant to display the available and the booked time-slots for the tables at the first restaurant's place of business during a time period defined by the first restaurant.

109. (previously presented) The method of claim 108, wherein the providing the restaurant display module further comprises configuring the restaurant display module to display the bookings of time-slots for tables previously booked at the first restaurant by Internet users through the Internet booking module.

110. (previously presented) The method of claim 108, wherein the providing the restaurant display module further comprises configuring the restaurant display module to display the bookings of time-slots for tables previously booked for customers by the first restaurant through the reservation table management module.

111. (previously presented) The method of claim 108, wherein the displaying time-slots during the time period defined by the first restaurant further comprises configuring the displayed time-slots to correspond to records among the plurality of records in the first reservation booking database.

112. (previously presented) The method of claim 111, further comprising enabling the first restaurant to write customer information into the records.

113. (previously presented) The method of claim 111, further comprising enabling the Internet user to write customer information into the record through the Internet booking module.

114. (previously presented) The method of claim 111, further comprising configuring the record to include at least one of the following fields: a name field for storing the name of the customer; a mailing address field for storing the mailing address of the customer; an email address field for storing the email address of the customer; a phone number field for storing the phone number of the customer; a credit card field for storing the credit card information, of the customer; and a password field for storing the password information of the customer.

115. (previously presented) The method of claim 99, further comprising providing a customer search module to aid the first restaurant in finding one of the time-slots booked in the name of a customer.

116. (previously presented) The method of claim 99, further comprising providing a cancellation module configured to permit the Internet user to cancel a previously booked time-slot for a table booked by the Internet user at the first restaurant's place of business.

117. (previously presented) The method of claim 99, further comprising providing a table layout display module configured to display the layout of tables at the first restaurant's place of business.

118. (previously presented) The method of claim 117, wherein the providing the table layout display module further comprises displaying booked tables in a first display mode and open tables in a second display mode.

119. (previously presented) A software product comprising:

- a first restaurant reservation booking database having a plurality of records, the plurality of records corresponding to a plurality of time-slots for tables at the first restaurant;

- a restaurant table reservation management module configured to enable the first restaurant to book time-slots in the first reservation booking database to reserve the tables at the first restaurant for customers not making bookings over the Internet; and

- an Internet booking module configured to enable an Internet user to book an available one of the time-slots to reserve one of the tables at the first restaurant; and

- an update module configured to update over an always on non-dial up internet connection a copy of the first reservation booking database maintained at a central computing location, the update module configured to update the copy of the first reservation booking database in a substantially real time when the first reservation booking database is updated.

120. (previously presented) An apparatus comprising:

a reservation booking database means having a plurality of records, the plurality of records corresponding to a plurality of time-slots for tables at a restaurant;

a web site module means for creating an Internet web site to enable an Internet user to book a table at the restaurant, the web site module means further comprising:

a time-slot display module means for displaying one or more available time-slots corresponding to one or more tables at the restaurant's place of business; and

a booking module means for enabling the Internet user to book one of the available time-slots in the reservation booking database; and

a restaurant maintenance module means for providing the restaurant access to the restaurant's table reservation booking database means, the restaurant maintenance module means further comprising:

a table reservation management module means for enabling the restaurant to book time-slots in the reservation booking database means to reserve tables at the restaurant for customers not making bookings over the Internet

a first computer means located at the restaurant, the first computer means configured to store a first copy of the reservation booking database means;

a second computer means located at a location remote from the restaurant, the second computer means configured to store a second copy of the reservation booking database means; and

the first computer means being connected to the second computer means through the internet, the first computer means being configured to be connected to the internet using an always connected, non-dial up connection, to the internet so that the first computer means and the second computer means can synchronize the second copy of the reservation

booking database means when the first copy of the reservation booking database on the first computer means is updated.

121. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 79, wherein the first display mode is a first color and the second display mode is a second color.
122. (cancelled)
123. (previously presented) The method of claim 118, wherein the first display mode is a first color and the second display mode is a second color.
124. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the website module is configured to be accessible to the Internet user using a personal computer.
125. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 124, wherein the website module is configured to be accessible to the Internet using a computing device coupled to the Internet using a wireless device.
126. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the table reservation management module is further configured to enable the number of records in the reservation booking database for the restaurant to be defined by the restaurant.
127. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the always connected, non-dial up connection includes one of the following types of connections: cable modems, wireless modems, DSL lines, or T-1 lines.
128. (currently amended) The reservation system of claim 80, wherein the always connected, non-dial up connection includes one of the following types of connections: cable modems, wireless modems, DSL lines, or T-1 lines.
129. (previously presented) The method of claim 99, wherein the always connected, non-dial up connection includes one of the following types of connections: cable modems, wireless modems, DSL lines, or T-1 lines.
130. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 120, wherein the always connected, non-dial up connection includes one of the following types of connections: cable modems, wireless modems, DSL lines, or T-1 lines.